

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSY-02 /061 W  
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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 180  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
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E.O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: PINT PGOV NL  
SUBJECT: DUTCH OPPOSITION PLANS ELECTORAL ATTACK

REF: THE HAGUE 1522

1. SUMMARY. THE FALL OF THE NETHERLANDS' CENTER LEFT COALITION HAS GIVEN NEW AMMUNITION TO THE DUTCH RIGHT IN ITS BATTLE TO REENTER GOVERNMENT. THE CURRENT DUTCH PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION, HOWEVER, PRESENTS NO IMMEDIATE REWARDS TO THE OPPOSITION IN THE WAKE OF A CRISIS. THUS, THE LIBERALS STILL FIND THEMSELVES ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN.  
END SUMMARY.

2. THE LIBERAL (VVD) PARTY, WHILE ENCOURAGED BY THE POLLS AND THE FALL OF THE GOVERNMENT, HAS BEEN IN SOMETHING OF A QUANDARY SINCE THE CRISIS. THEY DID NOT CAUSE THE FALL OF THEIR ARCH OPPONENT, SOCIALIST PRIMEE MINISTER DEN UYL. THIS WAS BROUGHT ABOUT BY JUSTICE MINISTER VAN AGT, DEPUTY PREMIER IN DEN UYL'S CABINET. NEITHER ARE THE LIBERALS IN A POSITION TO CAPITALIZE ON THE CRISIS, WITH DEN  
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UYL NOW IN A CARETAKER ROLE UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTIONS. ADDING TO THEIR UNDOUBTED FRUSTRATION IS THE FACT THAT PUBLIC AND PRESS ATTENTION IN THE WAKE OF THE CRISIS FOCUSSED ON THE SQUABBLES AMONG THE COALITION PARTIES, LEAVING THE VVD ON THE PERIPHERY.

3. IN THIS SITUATION THE VVD MET LAST WEEKEND IN A

PARTY CONGRESS TO DRAW UP ITS FINAL ELECTION PLATFORM. THEY HAD TWO OPTIONS: GO AFTER THE VOTES, IN PART AT THE EXPENSE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (CDA) CENTER, OR COOL IT, WHILE MAXIMIZING THE ATTRACTIONS OF A CENTER-RIGHT COALITION, IN THE HOPE THAT THE CDA WILL EVENTUALLY TURN AWAY FROM THE PROGRESSIVES. THE PARTY CHOSE THE FORMER COURSE AND ADOPTED AN AGGRESSIVE POSTURE. PARTY LEADERS MADE CLEAR THAT THE LIBERALS WILL GO AFTER VOTES NOW AND TALK ABOUT COOPERATION WITH THE CENTER LATER. CONDITIONS FOR FUTURE CABINET FORMATION WERE STATED ONLY IN VAGUE TERMS. LIST-LEADER HANS WIEGEL, IN A FORCEFUL, ROUSING KEYNOTE SPEECH, LASHED OUT AT ALMOST EVERYONE IN THE GOVERNMENT BY NAME, INCLUDING THE CDA POLITICIANS WITH WHOM THE LIBERALS MUST SHARE POWER IF THEY ARE TO ENTER GOVERNMENT.

4. THERE WAS LITTLE INTERNAL SQUABBLING AMONG THE PROSPEROUS, WELL DRESSED CROWD WHICH ASSEMBLED AT THE HAGUE'S CONGRESGEBOUW. AMENDMENTS WERE DEBATED IN A GENTLEMANLY MANNER, AND MOST DISPUTES CONCERNED FINE POINTS. THE FINAL PLATFORM EMPHASIZED RESTRAINT IN FISCAL POLICY, STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND FOR NATO, AND CAUTION IN DEVELOPING NUCLEAR ENERGY. THE CONGRESS OVERRULED ITS LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORTED CONTINUED HIGH LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT AID. IN ALL, THE MOOD WAS UPBEAT, WITH POLLS AND PUNDITS PREDICTING A STRONG LIBERAL SHOWING IN MAY.

5. THE VVD MAY HAVE A LIABILITY, HOWEVER, IN THE STIFF, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOODEN MANNER OF ITS LIST LEADER. THOUGH ONLY 36 AND ALREADY A PROVEN VOTE GETTER, HANS WIEGEL DRESSES LIKE 60, SELDOM SMILES, AND OFTEN ADOPTS THE DEMEANOR OF A STRICT SCHOOLMASTER LECTURING A SLOW PUPIL. HARD-CORE VVD'ERS MAY BE IMPRESSED BY HIS COMMANDING STYLE AND "GIVE-EM-HELL" PARTISANSHIP, BUT THE VOTER LOOKING FOR A WARMFATHER-FIGURE WILL NOT LIKELY FIND IT IN HANS WIEGEL. THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL PROBLEM. EVEN IF THE VVD DOES WELL IN THE VOTING THERE STILL MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH SUPPORT IN THE NEW PARILAMENT, OR ONLY BARELY ENOUGH SUPPORT, FOR A LIBERAL-CDA COALITION.

6. COMMENT. WITH SOCIALISTS AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS EYEING A NEW CENTER LEFT COALITION, IT SI PERHAPS RATIONAL FOR THE VVD TO DECLARE A POX ON BOTH. WIEGEL'S BROADSIDES AT INDIVIDUAL CDA LEADERS MAY HOWEVER BOOMERANG BY ENCOURAGING THEM TO MAKE A SPECIAL EFFOOT TO HEAL THE RIFT WITH THE PROGRESSIVE. END COMMENT. MCCLOSKEY

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PARTY LINE, POLITICAL PARTIES, NATIONAL ELECTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS  
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